

EDD/NEASPEC/SOM(15)/4
8 February 2010

ENGLISH ONLY

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

Fifteenth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC

17-18 March 2010

Tokyo, Japan

REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

(Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda)

Eco-efficiency Partnership in North-East Asia

Note by the Secretariat

CONTENTS

I. Overview of Progress.....	2
II. Issues for Consideration.....	4

I. OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

1. The Project of Eco-efficiency Partnership aims at (a) creating a common view and knowledge among major stakeholders (b) facilitating the creation of subregional common policies in North-East Asia, (c) assisting in strengthening national capacity, and (d) raising public awareness. It consists of three components including:

1. Eco-tax reform partnership
2. Public-private-civil society partnership
3. Urban governance partnership

The 13th SOM approved the budget for preparatory activities and requested the Secretariat to an activity plan for the Partnership. The 14th SOM reviewed a draft activity plan of the Partnership and recognized the relevance of the proposed Eco-Efficiency Partnership to the ongoing national initiatives for improving energy and resource efficiency.

Table 1: Proposed Activity for the Partnership

Thematic Areas	Key Topics	Policy Dialogue and Initiative	Ground Demonstration
Eco-Tax Reform Partnership Thematic Leader:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sharing conceptual and policy framework for Eco-tax reform and Subsidy Reform ○ Environmental budgeting Public Administration and businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joint study on the application of eco-taxes in the subregion ○ Joint study for subsidy reduction/elimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Publication on the application of eco-taxes in the subregion ○ Thematic experts/stakeholders workshop
Public-Private-Civil Society Partnership Thematic Leader:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Achieving sustainable consumption (policies and awareness-raising) ○ Voluntary household-level contribution to climate change mitigation through economic incentives (tax breaks, carbon mileage through purchasing, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joint study on sustainable consumption incentive mechanisms and best practices ○ Create subregional eco-efficiency knowledge products and key performance indicators for the private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capacity building of Civil Society in eco-efficient production and consumption ○ Subregional eco-efficient products and key performance indicators for the private sectors. ○ Improvement and standardization of certification criteria of environmental labels ○ Thematic experts /stakeholders workshop

Urban Governance Partnership Thematic Leader:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable transport (inter-and intra city transport, role of public transport) ○ Sustainable building (energy efficiency) ○ Sustainable public utility supply (especially energy supply) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowledge exchange between cities and sectors (e.g., bicycle friendly cities - different experiences from Korea, Japan and China) ○ Joint assessment of status quo, challenges, opportunities and innovative approaches in subregion ○ Creation of subregional performance guideline and indicators for local governments, public utility suppliers and NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff swap programme between cities and sectors ○ subregional performance guideline and indicators ○ Pilot local government assistance project to mainstream sustainable infrastructure ○ Rental bicycle points and facilities for greener city development ○ Thematic experts/stakeholders workshop
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2. In particular, the 14th SOM noted a proposal of the delegation of the Russian Federation for potential areas and modalities of the government’s contribution to each component, and a proposal of the Republic of Korea (ROK) to hold an expert group meeting under the component of Public-Private-Civil Society Partnership in conjunction with the Low Carbon, Green Growth Convention in October 2009. The component of Public-Private-Civil Society Partnership intends to strengthen partnership among major stakeholders in improving eco-efficiency at both micro-and macro-levels while activities could focus on intensifying the linkages between greening production patterns of the private sector and consumption patterns of individuals.

3. As a follow up to the 14th SOM, the Secretariat undertook further consultations with key national institutions in the ROK and China to identify the need and area of subregional cooperation on green labeling. The consultations came to a conclusion to organize an EGM on “Cooperation and Harmonization of Green Labeling Programmes in North-East Asia”, which was postponed from 2009 to 2010 due to unforeseen situation. In this connection, the Secretariat has been under the preparation to organize the EGM back to back with the 15th SOM to identify challenges and opportunities in connection with green labeling programmes and policies in North-East Asia and develop subregional cooperation and harmonization activities to tackle identified challenges and opportunities.

4. In this regard, the Secretariat has carried out desk research on green labeling programmes in selected member countries and prepared the background paper entitled “Cooperation and Harmonization of Green Labeling Programmes in North-East Asia” for the EGM. The paper presents that in North-East Asia, countries such as China, Japan and the Republic of Korea have established their national green labeling programmes one after another. Recognizing the importance and benefits of cooperation and harmonization of various labeling programmes, North-East Asia countries have made certain efforts to move

towards this direction. However, compared with the regional cooperation and harmonization process in Europe, progress made in North-East Asia is shallow and at the level of mutual recognition. Given the absence of a common governing body for diversified green labeling programmes, various levels of environmental consciousness among the subregional countries, how to promote the cooperation and harmonization of various green labeling programmes in the sub-region is a daunting task. Based on the existing initiatives and experiences in other parts of the world, in particular cooperation and harmonization of green labels in Europe, the following issues are proposed for further consideration and discussion during the EGM:

- Share the best practices on green labeling programmes in North-east Asia;
- Share the incentive policies to promote the green labeling programmes in North-East Asia;
- Seek the opportunities on cooperation and harmonization of testing procedures, performance standards and labeling programmes of green products in North-East Asia;
- Enhance the green labeling programme to support national initiatives for greening development and addressing climate change.

5. Concerning the 3rd component of Urban Governance Partnership, the Secretariat received the expression of interests from Chinese cities including Dalian and Hainan in joining activities and preliminary consultations. The Secretariat has also explored strategies to enhance the sustainability of the project by developing activities for application of co-benefits approach which targets to simultaneously mitigate both air pollution and greenhouse gases. It also means integrated efforts to alleviate environmental impacts while meeting development needs in the subregion. Under this component, the Secretariat will scale up and replicate the results from the activities on co-benefits approach under the NEASPEC project on the Mitigation of Transboundary Air Pollution from Coal-Fired Power Plants to other cities in North-East Asia. The project plans to develop National and Subregional Strategies for the Application of the Co-benefits Approach and undertake demonstration projects in selected cities in China and Mongolia. By doing so, the synergies of the Air Pollution Project and the Partnership projects will be enhanced.

II. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The Meeting may wish to provide further guidance for the Secretariat and member countries on the direction and potential activities of the Partnership taking the outcome and recommendation of the EGM into account.

7. The Meeting may request member countries to express interests in taking the lead for thematic areas and/or developing and implementing specific activities.